



National Association of Health Underwriters

America's Benefits Specialists

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Citizen's Health Care Working Group Final Recommendations *NAHU Questions Validity of Results*

(Arlington, VA) – As directed by the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act, the Citizen's Health Care Working Group (CHCWG) released recommendations today to help improve America's health care delivery system. These over-simplified recommendations, however, do little to help improve health care and instead open the door to government-run health care and more mandated benefits. In fact, these recommendations are so fraught with pitfalls that Congress and the President should deem them invalid.

"The Citizen's Health Care Working Group recommendations were preordained before the group held their first meeting," stated Janet Trautwein, NAHU CEO and EVP. "There was absolutely no validity to how the group was organized and you can see by the eerie similarity between the final recommendations and the interim ones that the group placed little value on input from the public.

"I am especially concerned about the development of a 'core benefits package' for all Americans (recommendation four), and strongly oppose the federal government getting into the health benefit mandating business. Benefit mandates add to the cost of health insurance, as has been demonstrated repeatedly at the state level. There are now over 1,800 benefit mandates in existence, which various studies have shown add as much as 25 percent to the cost of insurance premiums.

"Every American should have access to affordable health care. However, any attempt to provide Americans with universal access to health coverage must preserve the private health insurance market. By leaving their recommendation so broad, the CHCWG has left the door open to spell government-run health care. Other countries have experimented with government-run health care systems, and this has only resulted in high-cost, lower quality and rationed care. Americans need to be able to access a competitive health insurance marketplace with a wide range of health plan choices.

"CHCWG was charged with an important mission, but because politics became the overriding player at the table these recommendations are not helpful in our quest to find real solutions to help improve America's health care delivery system. The vague language used and the groups' blatant disregard for public input make these recommendations invalid."

The National Association of Health Underwriters represents over 20,000 health insurance agents, brokers, consultants and professionals. Its members serve employers and individual consumers in accessing and purchasing affordable health insurance and related products. For more information, please contact Kelly Loussedes, vice president of public relations, at 703-273-3816 or kloussedes@nahu.org, or Brandi Travis, manager of communications, at 703-276-3815 or btravis@nahu.org.

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